

History of Ghana

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The Republic of Ghana is named after the medieval West African Ghana Empire.^[1] The Empire became known in Europe and Arabia as the Ghana Empire after the title of its emperor, the Ghana. The Empire appears to have broken up following the 1076 conquest by the Almoravid General Abu-Bakr Ibn-Umar. A reduced kingdom continued to exist after Almoravid rule ended, and the kingdom was later incorporated into subsequent Sahelian empires, such as the Mali Empire several centuries later. Geographically, the ancient Ghana Empire was approximately 500 miles (800 km) north and west of the modern state of Ghana, and controlled territories in the area of the Sénégal River and east towards the Niger rivers, in modern Senegal, Mauritania and Mali.

For most of central sub-Saharan Africa, agricultural expansion marked the period before 500. Farming began earliest on the southern tips of the Sahara, eventually giving rise to village settlements. Toward the end of the classical era, larger regional kingdoms had formed in West Africa, one of which was the Kingdom of Ghana, north of what is today the nation of Ghana. Before its fall at the beginning of the 10th century Akan migrants moved southward and founded several nation-states, including the first great Akan empire of the Bono founded in the 11th century and for which the Brong-Ahafo Region of Akanland is named. Later Akan groups such as the Ashanti federation and Fante states are thought to possibly have roots in the original Bono settlement at Bono manso. Much of the area was united under the Empire of Ashanti by the 16th century. The Ashanti government operated first as a loose network and eventually as a centralized kingdom with an advanced, highly specialized bureaucracy centred on Kumasi.

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Precolonial period

By the end of the 16th century, most of the ethnic groups constituting the modern Ghanaian population had settled in their present locations. Archaeological remains found in the coastal zone indicate that the area has been inhabited since the Bronze Age (ca. 2000 BC), but these societies, based on fishing in the extensive lagoons and rivers, have left few traces. Archaeological work also suggests that central Ghana north of the forest zone was inhabited as early as 3,000 to 4,000 years ago.^[2]

These migrations resulted in part from the formation and disintegration of a series of large states in the western Sudan (the region north of modern Ghana drained by the Niger River). Strictly speaking, *ghana* was the title of the king, but the Arabs, who left records of the kingdom, applied the term to the king, the capital, and the state. The 9th-century Berber historian and geographer Al Yaqubi described ancient Ghana as one of the three most organized states in the region (the others being Gao and Kanem in the central Sudan). Its rulers were renowned for their wealth in gold, the opulence of their courts, and their warrior/hunting skills. They were also masters of the trade in gold, which drew North African merchants to



16th-17th Century Akan Terracotta, Metropolitan Museum of Mavy, New York

the western Sudan. The military achievements of these and later western Sudanic rulers, and their control over the region's gold mines, constituted the nexus of their historical relations with merchants and rulers in North Africa and the Mediterranean.^[2]

Ghana succumbed to attacks by its neighbors in the 11th century, but its name and reputation endured. In 1957, when the leaders of the former British colony of the Gold Coast sought an appropriate name for their newly independent state—the first black African nation to gain its independence from colonial rule—they named their new country after ancient Ghana. The choice was more than merely symbolic, because modern Ghana, like its

namesake, was equally famed for its wealth and trade in gold.^[2]



Image of an Ashanti home before British colonization

Although none of the states of the western Sudan controlled territories in the area that is modern Ghana, several small kingdoms that later developed such as Bonoman, were ruled by nobles believed to have immigrated from that region. The trans-Saharan trade that contributed to the expansion of kingdoms in the western Sudan also led to the development of contacts with regions in northern modern Ghana, and in the forest to the south.^[2]

The growth of trade stimulated the development of early Akan states located on the trade route to the goldfields, in the forest zone of the south. The forest itself was thinly populated, but Akan-speaking peoples began to move into it toward the end of the 15th century, with the arrival of crops from South-east Asia and the New World that could be adapted to forest conditions. These new crops included sorghum, bananas, and cassava. By the beginning of the 16th century, European sources noted the existence of the gold-rich states of Akan and Twifu in the Ofin River Valley.^[2]



A typical Dagomba household comprising husband, wife and three children in Yendi, 1957

According to oral traditions and archaeological evidence, the Dagomba states were the earliest kingdoms to emerge in present-day Ghana as early as the 11th century, being well established by the close of the 16th century.^[2] Although the rulers of the Dagomba states were not usually Muslim, they brought with them, or welcomed, Muslims as scribes and medicine men. As a result of their presence, Islam influenced the north and Muslim influence spread by the activities of merchants and clerics.^[2]

In the broad belt of rugged country between the northern boundaries of the Muslim-influenced state of Dagomba, and the southernmost outposts of the Mossi Kingdoms (of present-day northern Ghana and southern Burkina Faso), were peoples who were not incorporated into the Dagomba entity. Among these

peoples were the Kassena agriculturalists. They lived in a so-called segmented society, bound together by kinship tie, and ruled by the head of their clan. Trade between Akan kingdoms and the Mossi kingdoms to the north flowed through their homeland, subjecting them to Islamic influence, and to the depredations of these more powerful neighbors.^[2]

Rise of the Ashanti

Under Chief Oti Akenten (r. ca. 1630–60), a series of successful military operations against neighboring Akan states brought a larger surrounding territory into alliance with Ashanti. At the end of the 17th century, Osei Tutu (died 1712 or 1717) became Asantehene (king of Ashanti). Under Osei Tutu's rule, the confederacy of Ashanti states was transformed into an empire with its capital at Kumasi. Political and military consolidation ensued, resulting in firmly established centralized authority.^[3] Osei Tutu was strongly influenced by the high priest, Anokye, who, tradition asserts, caused a stool of gold to descend from the sky to seal the union of Ashanti states. Stools already functioned as traditional symbols of chieftainship, but the Golden Stool represented the united spirit of all the allied states and established a dual allegiance that superimposed the confederacy over the individual component states. The Golden Stool remains a respected national symbol of the traditional past and figures extensively in Ashanti ritual.^[2]

Osei Tutu permitted newly conquered territories that joined the confederation to retain their own customs and chiefs, who were given seats on the Ashanti state council. Tutu's gesture made the process relatively easy and nondisruptive, because most of the earlier conquests had subjugated other Akan peoples. Within the Ashanti portions of the confederacy, each minor state continued to exercise internal self-rule, and its chief jealously guarded the state's prerogatives against encroachment by the central authority. A strong unity developed, however, as the various communities subordinated their individual interests to central authority in matters of national concern.^[2]

By the mid-18th century, Ashanti was a highly organized state. The wars of expansion that brought the northern states of Dagomba,^[4] Mamprusi, and Gonja^[5] under Ashanti influence were won during the reign of Opoku Ware I (died 1750), successor to Osei Kofi Tutu I. By the 1820s, successive rulers had extended Ashanti boundaries southward. Although the northern expansions linked Ashanti with trade networks across the desert and in Hausaland to the east, movements into the south brought the Ashanti into contact, sometimes antagonistic, with the coastal Fante, as well as with the various European merchants whose fortresses dotted the Gold Coast.^[2]

Early European contact and the slave trade

When the first Europeans arrived in the late 15th century, many inhabitants of the Gold Coast area were striving to consolidate their newly acquired territories and to settle into a secure and permanent environment. Initially, the Gold Coast did not participate in the export slave trade, rather as Ivor Wilks, a leading historian of Ghana, noted, the Akan purchased slaves from Portuguese traders operating from other parts of Africa, including the Congo and Benin in order to augment the labour needed for the state formation that was characteristic of this period.^[6]

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive. By 1471, they had reached the area that was to become known as the Gold Coast.^[7] The Gold Coast was so-named because it was an important source of gold.^[7] The Portuguese interest in trading for gold, ivory, and pepper so increased that in 1482 the Portuguese built

their first permanent trading post on the western coast of present-day Ghana. This fortress, a trade castle called São Jorge da Mina (later called Elmina Castle), was constructed to protect Portuguese trade from European competitors, and after frequent rebuildings and modifications, still stands.^[6]

The Portuguese position on the Gold Coast remained secure for over a century. During that time, Lisbon sought to monopolize all trade in the region in royal hands, though appointed officials at São Jorge, and used force to prevent English, French, and Flemish efforts to trade on the coast. By 1598, the Dutch began trading on the Gold Coast.^[8] The Dutch built forts at Komenda and Kormantsi by 1612. In 1637 they captured Elmina Castle from the Portuguese and Axim in 1642 (Fort St Anthony). Other European traders joined in by the mid-17th century, largely English, Danes, and Swedes. The coastline was dotted by more than 30 forts and castles built by Dutch, British, and Danish merchants primarily to protect their interests from other Europeans and pirates. The Gold Coast became the highest concentration of European military architecture outside of Europe. Sometimes they were also drawn into conflicts with local inhabitants as Europeans developed commercial alliances with local political authorities. These alliances, often complicated, involved both Europeans attempting to enlist or persuade their closest allies to attack rival European ports and their African allies, or conversely, various African powers seeking to recruit Europeans as mercenaries in their inter-state wars, or as diplomats to resolve conflicts.^[6]

Forts were built, abandoned, attacked, captured, sold, and exchanged, and many sites were selected at one time or another for fortified positions by contending European nations.^[6]

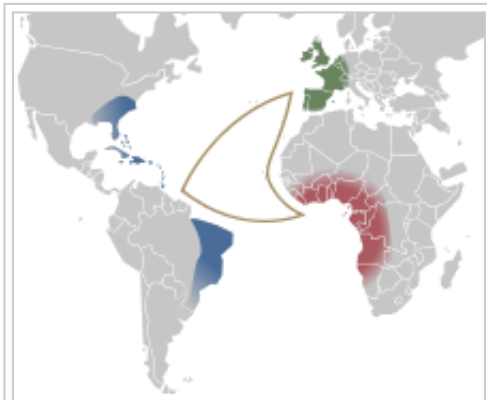
The Dutch West India Company operated throughout most of the 18th century. The *British African Company of Merchants*, founded in 1750, was the successor to several earlier organizations of this type. These enterprises built and manned new installations as the companies pursued their trading activities and defended their respective jurisdictions with varying degrees of government backing. There were short-lived ventures by the Swedes and the Prussians. The Danes remained until 1850, when they withdrew from the Gold Coast. The British gained possession of all Dutch coastal forts by the last quarter of the 19th century, thus making them the dominant European power on the Gold Coast.^[6]



Historic map of the Swedish Gold Coast

In the late 17th century, social changes within the polities of the Gold Coast led to transformations in **warfare**, and to the shift from being a gold exporting and slave importing economy to being a minor local slave exporting economy.^[9] To be sure, slavery and slave trading were already firmly entrenched in many African societies before their contact with Europe. In most situations, men as well as women captured in local warfare became slaves. In general, however, slaves in African communities were often treated as members of the society with specific rights, and many were ultimately absorbed into their masters' families as full members. Given traditional methods of agricultural production in Africa, slavery in Africa was quite different from that which existed in the commercial plantation environments of the New World.^[6]

Some scholars have challenged the premise that rulers on the Gold Coast engaged in wars of expansion for the sole purpose of acquiring slaves for the export market. For example, the Ashanti waged war mainly to pacify territories that were under Ashanti control, to exact tribute payments from subordinate kingdoms, and to secure access to trade routes—particularly those that connected the interior with the coast.^[6]



Triangular Atlantic slave trade routes

It is important to mention, however, that the supply of slaves to the Gold Coast was entirely in African hands. Most rulers, such as the kings of various Akan states engaged in the slave trade, as well as individual local merchants.^[6] A good number of the Slaves were also brought from various countries in the region and sold to middle men.

The demographic impact of the slave trade on West Africa was probably substantially greater than the number actually enslaved because a significant number of Africans perished during wars and bandit attacks or while in captivity awaiting transshipment. All nations with an interest in West Africa participated in the slave trade. Relations between the Europeans and the local populations

were often strained, and distrust led to frequent clashes. Disease caused high losses among the Europeans engaged in the slave trade, but the profits realized from the trade continued to attract them.^[6]

The growth of anti-slavery sentiment among Europeans made slow progress against vested African and European interests that were reaping profits from the traffic. Although individual clergymen condemned the slave trade as early as the 17th century, major Christian denominations did little to further early efforts at abolition. The Quakers, however, publicly declared themselves against slavery as early as 1727. Later in the century, the Danes stopped trading in slaves; Sweden and the Netherlands soon followed.^[6]

In 1807, Britain used its naval power and its diplomatic muscle to outlaw trade in slaves by its citizens and to begin a campaign to stop the international trade in slaves.^[10] The importation of slaves into the United States was outlawed in 1808. These efforts, however, were not successful until the 1860s because of the continued demand for plantation labour in the New World.^[6]

Because it took decades to end the trade in slaves, some historians doubt that the humanitarian impulse inspired the abolitionist movement. According to historian Eric Williams, for example, Europe abolished the trans-Atlantic slave trade only because its profitability was undermined by the Industrial Revolution. Williams argued that mass unemployment caused by the new industrial machinery, the need for new raw materials, and European competition for markets for finished goods are the real factors that brought an end to the trade in human cargo and the beginning of competition for colonial territories in Africa. Other scholars, however, disagree with Williams, arguing that humanitarian concerns as well as social and economic factors were instrumental in ending the African slave trade.^[6]

British Gold Coast

Britain and the Gold Coast: the early years

By the later part of the 19th century the Dutch and the British were the only traders left and after the Dutch withdrew in 1874, Britain made the Gold Coast a protectorate—a British Crown Colony. During the previous few centuries parts of the area were controlled by British, Portuguese, and Scandinavian powers, with the British ultimately prevailing. These nation-states maintained varying alliances with the colonial powers and each other, which resulted in the 1806 Ashanti-Fante War, as well as an ongoing struggle by the Empire of Ashanti against the British, the four Anglo-Ashanti Wars.



Neighbouring British and Dutch forts at Sekondi

By the early 19th century, the British, acquired most of the forts along the coast. Two major factors laid the foundations of British rule and the eventual establishment of a colony on the Gold Coast: British reaction to the Ashanti wars and the resulting instability and disruption of trade, and Britain's increasing preoccupation with the suppression and elimination of the slave trade.^[11]

During most of the 19th century, Ashanti, the most powerful state of the Akan interior, sought to expand its rule and to promote and protect its trade. The first Ashanti invasion of the

coastal regions took place in 1807; the Ashanti moved south again in 1811 and in 1814. These invasions, though not decisive, disrupted trade in such products as gold, timber, and palm oil, and threatened the security of the European forts. Local British, Dutch, and Danish authorities were all forced to come to terms with Ashanti, and in 1817 the African Company of Merchants signed a treaty of friendship that recognized Ashanti claims to sovereignty over large areas of the coast and its peoples.^[11]

The coastal people, primarily some of the Fante and the inhabitants of the new town of Accra came to rely on British protection against Ashanti incursions, but the ability of the merchant companies to provide this security was limited. The British Crown dissolved the company in 1821, giving authority over British forts on the Gold Coast to Governor Charles MacCarthy, governor of Sierra Leone. The British forts and Sierra Leone remained under common administration for the first half of the century. MacCarthy's mandate was to impose peace and to end the slave trade. He sought to do this by encouraging the coastal peoples to oppose Kumasi rule and by closing the great roads to the coast. Incidents and sporadic warfare continued, however. In 1823, the First Anglo-Ashanti War broke out and lasted until 1831.^[10] MacCarthy was killed, and most of his force was wiped out in a battle with Ashanti forces in 1824.^[11]

When the English government allowed control of the Gold Coast settlements to revert to the British African Company of Merchants in the late 1820s, relations with the Ashanti were still problematic. From the Ashanti point of view, the British had failed to control the activities of their local coastal allies. Had this been done, Ashanti might not have found it necessary to attempt to impose peace on the coastal peoples. MacCarthy's encouragement of coastal opposition to Ashanti and the subsequent 1824 British military attack further indicated to the Ashanti authorities that the Europeans, especially the British, did not respect Ashanti.^[11]

In 1830 a London committee of merchants chose Captain George Maclean to become president of a local council of merchants. Although his formal jurisdiction was limited, Maclean's achievements were substantial; for example, a peace treaty was arranged with the Ashanti in 1831. Maclean also supervised the coastal people by holding regular court in Cape Coast where he punished those found guilty of disturbing the peace. Between 1830 and 1843 while Maclean was in charge of affairs on the Gold Coast, no confrontations occurred with Ashanti, and the volume of trade reportedly increased threefold. Maclean's exercise of limited judicial power on the coast was so effective that a parliamentary committee recommended that the British government permanently administer its settlements and negotiate treaties with the coastal chiefs that would define Britain's relations with them. The government did so in 1843, the same year crown government was reinstated. Commander H. Worsley Hill was appointed first governor of the Gold Coast. Under Maclean's administration, several coastal tribes had submitted voluntarily to British protection. Hill proceeded to define the conditions and responsibilities of his jurisdiction over the protected

areas. He negotiated a special treaty with a number of Fante and other local chiefs that became known as the Bond of 1844. This document obliged local leaders to submit serious crimes, such as murder and robbery, to British jurisdiction and laid the legal foundation for subsequent British colonization of the coastal area.^[11]



Major General Sir Garnet Wolseley

Additional coastal states as well as other states farther inland eventually signed the Bond, and British influence was accepted, strengthened, and expanded. Under the terms of the 1844 arrangement, the British gave the impression that they would protect the coastal areas; thus, an informal protectorate came into being. As responsibilities for defending local allies and managing the affairs of the coastal protectorate increased, the administration of the Gold Coast was separated from that of Sierra Leone in 1850.^[11]

At about the same time, growing acceptance of the advantages offered by the British presence led to the initiation of another important step. In April 1852, local chiefs and elders met at Cape Coast to consult with the governor on means of raising revenue. With the governor's approval, the council of chiefs constituted itself as a legislative assembly. In approving its resolutions, the governor indicated that the assembly of chiefs should become a permanent fixture of the protectorate's constitutional machinery, but the assembly was given no specific constitutional authority to pass

laws or to levy taxes without the consent of the people.^[11]

The Second Anglo-Ashanti War broke out in 1863 and lasted until 1864. In 1872, British influence over the Gold Coast increased further when Britain purchased Elmina Castle, the last of the Dutch forts along the coast.^[12] The Ashanti, who for years had considered the Dutch at Elmina as their allies, thereby lost their last trade outlet to the sea. To prevent this loss and to ensure that revenue received from that post continued, the Ashanti staged their last invasion of the coast in 1873. After early successes, they finally came up against well-trained British forces who compelled them to retreat beyond the Pra River. Later attempts to negotiate a settlement of the conflict with the British were rejected by the commander of their forces, Major General Sir Garnet Wolseley. To settle the Ashanti problem permanently, the British invaded Ashanti with a sizable military force. This invasion initiated the Third Anglo-Ashanti War. The attack, which was launched in January 1874 by 2,500 British soldiers and large numbers of African auxiliaries, resulted in the occupation and burning of Kumasi, the Ashanti capital.^[11]

The subsequent peace treaty of 1875, required the Ashanti to renounce any claim to many southern territories. The Ashanti also had to keep the road to Kumasi open to trade. From this point on, Ashanti power steadily declined. The confederation slowly disintegrated as subject territories broke away and as protected regions defected to British rule. The warrior spirit of the nation was not entirely subdued, however, and enforcement of the treaty led to recurring difficulties and outbreaks of fighting. In 1896, the British dispatched another expedition that again occupied Kumasi and that forced Ashanti to become a protectorate of the British Crown. This became the Fourth Anglo-Ashanti War which lasted from 1894 until 1896. The position of "Asantehene" was abolished and the incumbent, Prempeh I, was exiled.^[11] A British resident was installed at Kumasi.^[13]

The core of the Ashanti federation accepted these terms grudgingly. In 1900 the Ashanti rebelled again (the War of the Golden Stool) but were defeated the next year, and in 1902 the British proclaimed Ashanti a colony under the jurisdiction of the governor of the Gold Coast.^[13] The annexation was made with misgivings and recriminations on both sides. With Ashanti, and golden district subdued and annexed, British colonization of the region became a reality.^[11]

British rule of the Gold Coast: the colonial era

Military confrontations between Ashanti and the Fante contributed to the growth of British influence on the Gold Coast, as the Fante states—concerned about Ashanti activities on the coast—signed the Bond of 1844 at Fomena-Adansi, that allowed the British to usurp judicial authority from African courts. As a result of the exercise of ever-expanding judicial powers on the coast and also to ensure that the coastal peoples remained firmly under control, the British proclaimed the existence of the Gold Coast Colony on July 24, 1874, which extended from the coast inland to the edge of Ashanti territory. Though the coastal peoples were unenthusiastic about this development, there was no popular resistance, likely because the British made no claim to any rights to the land.^[14]



1896 Map of the British Gold Coast Colony.

In 1896, a British military force invaded Ashanti and overthrew the native *Asantehene* named Prempeh I.^[13] The deposed Ashanti leader was replaced by a British resident at Kumasi.^[13] The British sphere of influence was, thus, extended to include Ashanti following their defeat in 1896. However, British Governor Hodgson went too far in his restrictions on the Ashanti, when, in 1900, he demanded the "Golden Stool," the symbol of Ashanti rule and independence for the Ashanti. This caused another Ashanti revolt against the British colonizers.^[13] However, the Ashanti were defeated again in 1901. Once the Asantehene and his council had been exiled, the British appointed a resident commissioner to Ashanti. Each Ashanti state was administered as a separate entity and was ultimately responsible to the governor of the Gold Coast.

In the meantime, the British became interested in the Northern Territories north of Ashanti, which they believed would forestall the advances of the French and the Germans. After 1896 protection was extended to northern areas whose trade with the coast had been controlled by Ashanti. In 1898 and 1899, European colonial powers amicably demarcated the boundaries between the Northern Territories and the surrounding French and German colonies. The Northern Territories were proclaimed a

British protectorate in 1902. Like the Ashanti protectorate, the Northern Territories were placed under the authority of a resident commissioner who was responsible to the governor of the Gold Coast. The governor ruled both Ashanti and the Northern Territories by proclamations until 1946.^[14]

With the north under British control, the three territories of the Gold Coast—the Colony (the coastal regions), Ashanti, and the Northern Territories—became, for all practical purposes, a single political unit, or crown colony, known as the Gold Coast. The borders of present-day Ghana were realized in May 1956

when the people of the Volta region, known as British Mandated Togoland, a vote was made in a plebiscite on whether British Togoland should become part of modern Ghana; the Togoland Congress voted 42% against. 58% of votes opted for integration.^[14]

Colonial administration

Beginning in 1850, the coastal regions increasingly came under control of the governor of the British fortresses, who was assisted by the Executive Council and the Legislative Council. The Executive Council was a small advisory body of European officials that recommended laws and voted taxes, subject to the governor's approval. The Legislative Council included the members of the Executive Council and unofficial members initially chosen from British commercial interests. After 1900 three chiefs and three other Africans were added to the Legislative Council, though the inclusion of Africans from Ashanti and the Northern Territories did not take place until much later.^[15]

The gradual emergence of centralized colonial government brought about unified control over local services, although the actual administration of these services was still delegated to local authorities. Specific duties and responsibilities came to be clearly delineated, and the role of traditional states in local administration was also clarified. The structure of local government had its roots in traditional patterns of government. Village councils of chiefs and elders were responsible for the immediate needs of individual localities, including traditional law and order and the general welfare. The councils ruled by consent rather than by right: though chosen by the ruling class, a chief continued to rule because he was accepted by his people.^[15]

British authorities adopted a system of indirect rule for colonial administration, wherein traditional chiefs maintained power but took instructions from their European supervisors. Indirect rule was cost-effective (by reducing the number of European officials needed), minimized local opposition to European rule, and guaranteed law and order. Though theoretically decentralizing, indirect rule in practice caused chiefs to look to Accra (the capital) rather than to their people for decisions. Many chiefs, who were rewarded with honors, decorations, and knighthood by government commissioners, came to regard themselves as a ruling aristocracy. In its preservation of traditional forms of power, indirect rule failed to provide opportunities for the country's growing population of educated young men. Other groups were dissatisfied because there was insufficient cooperation between the councils and the central government and



The Portuguese-built Elmina Castle in Accra as purchased by Britain in 1873. It is now a World Heritage Site

because some felt that the local authorities were too dominated by the British district commissioners.^[15]

In 1925 provincial councils of chiefs were established in all three territories of the colony, partly to give the chiefs a colony-wide function. The 1927 Native Administration Ordinance clarified and regulated the powers and areas of jurisdiction of chiefs and councils. In 1935 the Native Authorities Ordinance combined the central colonial government and the local authorities into a single governing system. New native authorities, appointed by the governor, were given wide powers of local government under the supervision of the central government's provincial commissioners, who made sure that their policies would be those of the central government. The provincial councils and moves to strengthen them were not popular. Even by

British standards, the chiefs were not given enough power to be effective instruments of indirect rule. Some Ghanaians believed that the reforms, by increasing the power of the chiefs at the expense of local initiative, permitted the colonial government to avoid movement toward any form of popular participation in the colony's government.^[15]

Economic and social development

The years of British administration of the Gold Coast during the 20th century were an era of significant progress in social, economic, and educational development. Communications and railroads were greatly improved. New crops were introduced. A leading crop that was the result of an introduced crop was coffee.^[16] However, most spectacular among these introduced crops was the cacao tree which had been indigenous to the New World and had been introduced in Africa by the Spanish and Portuguese.^[16] Cacao had been introduced to the Gold Coast in 1879 by Tetteh Quashie a blacksmith from Gold Coast.^[17] Cacao tree raising and farming became widely accepted in the eastern part of the Gold Coast.^[16] In 1891, the Gold Coast exported only 80 lbs. of cacao worth no more than 4 pounds sterling. However, by the 1920s cacao exports had passed 200,000 tons and had reached a value of 4.7 million pounds sterling. By 1928, cacao exports had reached 11.7 million pounds sterling.^[18] Thus, cacao production became a major part of the economy of the Gold coast and later a major part of Ghana's economy.^[19]

The colony's earnings increased further from the export of timber and gold. Revenue from export of the colony's natural resources financed internal improvements in infrastructure and social services. The foundation of an educational system more advanced than any other else in West Africa also resulted from mineral export revenue. It was through British-style education that a new Ghanaian elite gained the means and the desire to strive for independence. From beginnings in missionary schools, the early part of the 20th century saw the opening of secondary schools and the country's first institute of higher learning.^[19]

Many of the economic and social improvements in the Gold Coast in the early part of the current century have been attributed to the Canadian-born Gordon Guggisberg, governor from 1919 to 1927.^[20] Within the first six weeks of his governorship, he presented a ten-year development programme to the Legislative Council.^[20] He suggested first the improvement of transportation. Then, in order of priority, his prescribed improvements included water supply, drainage, hydroelectric projects, public buildings, town improvements, schools, hospitals, prisons, communication lines, and other services. Guggisberg also set a goal of filling half of the colony's technical positions with Africans as soon as they could be trained. His programme has been described as the most ambitious ever proposed in West Africa up to that time.^[19]

The colony assisted Britain in both World War I and World War II. In the ensuing years, however, postwar inflation and instability severely hampered readjustment for returning veterans, who were in the forefront of growing discontent and unrest. Their war service and veterans' associations had broadened their horizons, making it difficult for them to return to the humble and circumscribed positions set aside for Africans by the colonial authorities.^[19]

The growth of nationalism and the end of colonial rule

As Ghana developed economically, education of the citizenry progressed apace. In 1890 there were only 5 government and 49 "assisted" mission schools in the whole of the Gold Coast with a total enrollment of only 5,000.^[21] By 1920 there were 20 governmental schools, 188 "assisted" mission and 309 "unassisted" mission schools with a total enrollment of 43,00 pupils.^[21] By 1940, there were 91,000 children attending Gold Coast schools. By 1950, the 279,000 children attending some 3,000 schools in the Gold Coast.^[21] This meant that, in 1950, 43.6% of the school-age children in the Gold Coast colony were attending school.^[21]

Thus by the end of the Second World War, the Gold Coast colony was the richest and most educated territories in West Africa.^[21] Within this educated environment, the focus of government power gradually shifted from the hands of the governor and his officials into those of Ghanaians, themselves. The changes resulted from the gradual development of a strong spirit of nationalism and were to result eventually in independence. The development of national consciousness accelerated quickly in the post-World War II era, when, in addition to ex-servicemen, a substantial group of urban African workers and traders emerged to lend mass support to the aspirations of a small educated minority.

Early manifestations of nationalism in Ghana

By the late 19th century, a growing number of educated Africans increasingly found unacceptable an arbitrary political system that placed almost all power in the hands of the governor through his appointment of council members. In the 1890s, some members of the educated coastal elite organized themselves into the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society to protest a land bill that threatened traditional land tenure. This protest helped lay the foundation for political action that would ultimately lead to independence. In 1920, one of the African members of the Legislative Council, Joseph E. Casely-Hayford, convened the National Congress of British West Africa.^[22] The National Congress demanded a wide range of reforms and innovations for British West Africa.^[22] The National Congress sent a delegation to London to urge the Colonial Office to consider the principle of elected representation. The group, which claimed to speak for all British West African colonies, represented the first expression of political solidarity between intellectuals and nationalists of the area. Though the delegation was not received in London (on the grounds that it represented only the interests of a small group of urbanized Africans), its actions aroused considerable support among the African elite at home.^[23]

Notwithstanding their call for elected representation as opposed to a system whereby the governor appointed council members, these nationalists insisted that they were loyal to the British Crown and that they merely sought an extension of British political and social practices to Africans. Notable leaders included Africanus Horton, the writer John Mensah Sarbah, and S. R. B. Attah-Ahoma. Such men gave the nationalist movement a distinctly elitist flavour that was to last until the late 1940s.^[23]

The constitution of April 8, 1925, promulgated by Guggisberg, created provincial councils of paramount chiefs for all but the northern provinces of the colony. These councils in turn elected six chiefs as unofficial members of the Legislative Council, which however had an inbuilt British majority and whose powers were in any case purely advisory. Although the new constitution appeared to recognize some African sentiments, Guggisberg was concerned primarily with protecting British interests. For example, he provided Africans with a limited voice in the central government; yet, by limiting nominations to chiefs, he drove a wedge

between chiefs and their educated subjects. The intellectuals believed that the chiefs, in return for British support, had allowed the provincial councils to fall completely under control of the government. By the mid-1930s, however, a gradual rapprochement between chiefs and intellectuals had begun.^[23]

Agitation for more adequate representation continued. Newspapers owned and managed by Africans played a major part in provoking this discontent—six were being published in the 1930s. As a result of the call for broader representation, two more unofficial African members were added to the Executive Council in 1943. Changes in the Legislative Council, however, had to await a different political climate in London, which came about only with the postwar election of a British Labour Party government.^[23]

The new Gold Coast constitution of March 29, 1946 (also known as the Burns constitution after the governor of the time, Sir Alan Cuthbert Maxwell Burns) was a bold document. For the first time, the concept of an official majority was abandoned. The Legislative Council was now composed of six ex-officio members, six nominated members, and eighteen elected members, however the Legislative Council continued to have purely advisory powers – all executive power remained with the governor. The 1946 constitution also admitted representatives from Ashanti into the council for the first time. Even with a Labour Party government in power, however, the British continued to view the colonies as a source of raw materials that were needed to strengthen their crippled economy. Change that would place real power in African hands was not a priority among British leaders until after rioting and looting in Accra and other towns and cities in early 1948 over issues of pensions for ex-servicemen, the dominant role of foreigners in the economy, the shortage of housing, and other economic and political grievances.^[23]



Sir Arnold Hodson was Governor from 1934 to 1941.

With elected members in a decisive majority, Ghana had reached a level of political maturity unequalled anywhere in colonial Africa. The constitution did not, however, grant full self-government. Executive power remained in the hands of the governor, to whom the Legislative Council was responsible. Hence, the constitution, although greeted with enthusiasm as a significant milestone, soon encountered trouble. World War II had just ended, and many Gold Coast veterans who had served in British overseas expeditions returned to a country beset with shortages, inflation, unemployment, and black-market practices. There veterans, along with discontented urban elements, formed a nucleus of malcontents ripe for disruptive action. They were now joined by farmers, who resented drastic governmental measures required to cut out diseased cacao trees in order to control an epidemic, and by many others who were unhappy that the end of the war had not been followed by economic improvements.^[23]

Politics of the independence movements

Although political organizations had existed in the British colony, the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), founded on August 4, 1947 by educated Ghanaians known as The Big Six, was the first nationalist movement with the aim of self-government "in the shortest possible time." It called for the replacement of chiefs on the Legislative Council with educated persons. They also demanded that, given their education, the colonial administration should respect them and accord them positions of responsibility. In particular, the UGCC leadership criticized the government for its failure to solve the problems of unemployment, inflation, and the disturbances that had come to characterize the society at the end of the

war. Though they opposed the colonial administration, UGCC members did not seek drastic or revolutionary change. Public dissatisfaction with the UGCC expressed itself on February 28, 1948 as a demonstration of ex-servicemen organized by the ex-serviceman's union paraded through Accra.^[24] To disperse the demonstrators, police fired on them killing three ex-servicemen and wounding sixty. Five days of violent disorder followed in Accra in response to the shooting and rioters broke into and looted the shops owned by Europeans and Syrians.^[25] Rioting also broke out in Kumasi and other towns across the Gold Coast. The Big Six including Nkrumah were imprisoned by the British authorities from 12 March to 12 April 1948. The police shooting and the resultant riots indicated that the gentlemanly manner in which politics had been conducted by the UGCC was irrelevant in the new post-war world. This change in the dynamics of politics of the Gold Coast was not lost on Kwame Nkrumah who broke with the UGCC publicly during its Easter Convention in 1949, and created his Convention People's Party (CPP) on 12 June 1949.^[26]

After his brief tenure with the UGCC, the US- and British-educated Nkrumah broke with the organization over his frustration at the UGCC's weak attempts to solve the problems of the Gold Coast colony by negotiating another new conciliatory colonial constitution with the British colonial authority.^[25] Unlike the UGCC's call for self- government "in the shortest possible time," Nkrumah and the CPP asked for "self-government now." The party leadership identified itself more with ordinary working people than with the UGCC and its intelligentsia, and the movement found support among workers, farmers, youths, and market women. The politicized population consisted largely of ex-servicemen, literate persons, journalists, and elementary school teachers, all of whom had developed a taste for populist conceptions of democracy. A growing number of uneducated but urbanized industrial workers also formed part of the support group. By June 1949, Nkrumah had a mass following.^[26]

The constitution of January 1, 1951 resulted from the report of the Coussey Committee, created because of disturbances in Accra and other cities in 1948. In addition to giving the Executive Council a large majority of African ministers, it created an assembly, half the elected members of which were to come from the towns and rural districts and half from the traditional councils. Although it was an enormous step forward, the new constitution still fell far short of the CPP's call for full self-government. Executive power remained in British hands, and the legislature was tailored to permit control by traditionalist interests.^[26]

With increasing popular backing, the CPP in early 1950 initiated a campaign of "Positive Action" intended to instigate widespread strikes and nonviolent resistance. When some violent disorders occurred on January 20, 1950 Nkrumah was arrested and imprisoned for sedition. This merely established him as a leader and hero, building popular support, and when the first elections were held for the Legislative Assembly under the new constitution from February 5–10, 1951, Nkrumah (still in jail) won a seat, and the CPP won a two-thirds majority of votes cast winning 34 of the 38 elected seats in the Assembly. Nkrumah was released from jail on 11 February 1951, and the following day accepted an invitation to form a government as "leader of government business," a position similar to that of prime minister. The start of Nkrumah's first term was marked by cooperation with the British governor. During the next few years, the government was gradually transformed into a full parliamentary system. The changes were opposed by the more traditionalist African elements, though opposition proved ineffective in the face of popular support for independence at an early date.^[26]

On March 10, 1952 the new position of prime minister was created, and Nkrumah was elected to the post by the Assembly. At the same time the Executive Council became the cabinet. The new constitution of 5 May 1954 ended the election of assembly members by the tribal councils. The Legislative Assembly

increased in size, and all members were chosen by direct election from equal, single-member constituencies. Only defense and foreign policy remained in the hands of the governor; the elected assembly was given control of virtually all internal affairs of the colony.^[26] The CPP won 71 of the 104 seats in the 15 June 1954 election.

The CPP pursued a policy of political centralization, which encountered serious opposition. Shortly after the 15 June 1954 election, a new party, the Ashanti-based National Liberation Movement (NLM), was formed. The NLM advocated a federal form of government, with increased powers for the various regions. NLM leaders criticized the CPP for perceived dictatorial tendencies. The new party worked in cooperation with another regionalist group, the Northern People's Party. When these two regional parties walked out of discussions on a new constitution, the CPP feared that London might consider such disunity an indication that the colony was not yet ready for the next phase of self-government.^[26]

The British constitutional adviser, however, backed the CPP position. The governor dissolved the assembly in order to test popular support for the CPP demand for immediate independence. On 11 May 1956 the British agreed to grant independence if so requested by a 'reasonable' majority of the new legislature.^[27] New elections were held on 17 July 1956. In keenly contested elections, the CPP won 57 percent of the votes cast, but the fragmentation of the opposition gave the CPP every seat in the south as well as enough seats in Ashanti, the Northern Territories, and the Trans-Volta Region to hold a two-thirds majority by winning 72 of the 104 seats.^[26]

On May 9, 1956 a plebiscite was conducted under United Nations (UN) auspices to decide the future disposition of British Togoland and French Togoland. The British trusteeship, the western portion of the former German colony, had been linked to the Gold Coast since 1919 and was represented in its parliament. The dominant ethnic group, the Ewe people, were divided between the two Togos. A majority (58%) of British Togoland inhabitants voted in favour of union, and the area was absorbed into Akanland (Southern Gold Coast) and Dagbon (Northern Ghana). There was, however, vocal opposition to the incorporation from the Ewe people (42%) in British Togoland.^[26]

Independent Ghana

On August 3, 1956, the new assembly passed a motion authorizing the government to request independence within the British Commonwealth.^[28] The opposition did not attend the debate, and the vote was unanimous. The British government accepted this motion as clearly representing a reasonable majority, so on 18 September 1956 the British set 6 March 1957, the 113th anniversary of the Bond of 1844, as the date the former British colony of the Gold Coast was to become the independent state of Ghana, and the nation's Legislative Assembly was to become the National Assembly.^[29] Nkrumah continued as prime minister, and Queen Elizabeth II as monarch, represented in the former colony by a governor general, Sir Charles Noble Arden-Clarke. This status of Ghana as a Commonwealth realm would continue until 1960, when after a national referendum, Ghana was declared a republic.^[30]



Universal Newsreel about the independence of Ghana

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Among the CPP's earliest acts was the outright abolition of regional assemblies. Another was the dilution of the clauses designed to ensure a non-political and competitive civil service. This allowed Nkrumah to appoint his followers to positions throughout the upper ranks of public employment. Thereafter, unfettered by constitutional restrictions and with an obedient party majority in the assembly, Nkrumah began his administration of the first newly independent African country south of the Sahara. People believe that during the Queen of England's reign in the 1800's, she sent her men to take the precious golden stool either from the people or a royalty. The greatest legend in Ghana, Yaa Asantewaa fought back on her own and tried to gain justice for Ghana. The English took her daughter and when she found out she surrendered but they killed them both in the end. Asantewaa is one of the greatest legends in Ghana because she went to war and wanted Ghana's freedom. We will always remember you Yaa Asantewaa

Nkrumah, Ghana, and Africa

Kwame Nkrumah has been described by author Peter Omari as a dictator who "made much of elections, when he was aware that they were not really free but rigged in his favor." According to Omari, the CPP administration of Ghana was one that manipulated the constitutional and processes of democracy to justify Nkrumah's agenda. The extent to which the government would pursue that agenda constitutionally was demonstrated early in the administration's life when it succeeded in passing the Deportation Act of 1957, the same year that ethnic, religious, and regional parties were banned. The Deportation Act empowered the governor general and, therefore, subsequent heads of state, to expel persons whose presence in the country was deemed not in the interest of the public good. Although the act was to be applied only to non-Ghanaians, several people to whom it was later applied claimed to be citizens.^[31]

The *Preventive Detention Act*, passed in 1958, gave power to the prime minister to detain certain persons for up to five years without trial. Amended in 1959 and again in 1962, the act was seen by opponents of the CPP government as a flagrant restriction of individual freedom and human rights. Once it had been granted these legal powers, the CPP administration managed to silence its opponents. Dr J. B. Danquah, a leading member of the UGCC, was detained until he died in prison in 1965. Dr Kofi Abrefa Busia, leader of the



Kwame Nkrumah, pictured in 1961

opposition United Party (UP), formed by the NLM and other parties in response to Nkrumah's outlawing of so-called separatist parties in 1957, went into exile in London to escape detention, while other members still in the country joined the ruling party.^[31] On 1 July 1960, Ghana became a republic, and Nkrumah won the presidential election that year. Shortly thereafter, Nkrumah was proclaimed president for life, and the CPP became the sole party of the state. Using the powers granted him by the party and the constitution, Nkrumah by 1961 had detained an estimated 400 to 2,000 of his opponents. Nkrumah's critics pointed to the rigid hold of the CPP over the nation's political system and to numerous cases of human rights abuses. Others, however, defended Nkrumah's agenda and policies.^[31]

Nkrumah discussed his political views in his numerous writings, especially in *Africa Must Unite* (1963) and in *NeoColonialism* (1965). These writings show the impact of his stay in Britain in the mid-1940s. The Pan-Africanist movement, which had held one of its annual conferences, attended by Nkrumah, at Manchester in 1945, was influenced by socialist ideologies. The movement sought unity among people of African descent and also improvement in the lives of workers who, it was alleged, had been exploited by capitalist enterprises in Africa. Western countries with colonial histories were identified as the exploiters. According to the socialists, "oppressed" people ought to identify with the socialist countries and organizations that best represented their interests; however, all the dominant world powers in the immediate post-1945 period, except the Soviet Union and the United States, had colonial ties with Africa. Nkrumah asserted that even the United States, which had never colonized any part of Africa, was in an advantageous position to exploit independent Africa unless preventive efforts were taken.^[31]

According to Nkrumah, his government, which represented the first black African nation to win independence, had an important role to play in the struggle against capitalist interests on the continent. As he put it, "the independence of Ghana would be meaningless unless it was tied to the total liberation of Africa." It was important, then, he said, for Ghanaians to "seek first the political kingdom." Economic benefits associated with independence were to be enjoyed later, proponents of Nkrumah's position argued. But Nkrumah needed strategies to pursue his goals.^[31]

On the domestic front, Nkrumah believed that rapid modernization of industries and communications was necessary and that it could be achieved if the workforce were completely Africanized and educated. Even more important, however, Nkrumah believed that this domestic goal could be achieved faster if it were not hindered by reactionary politicians—elites in the opposition parties and traditional chiefs—who might compromise with Western imperialists. From such an ideological position, Nkrumah supporters justified the Deportation Act of 1957, the Detention Acts of 1958, 1959 and 1962, parliamentary intimidation of CPP opponents, the appointment of Nkrumah as president for life, the recognition of his party as the sole political organization of the state, the creation of the Young Pioneer Movement for the ideological education of the nation's youth, and the party's control of the civil service. Government expenditure on road building projects, mass education of adults and children, and health services, as well as the construction of the Akosombo Dam, were all important if Ghana were to play its leading role in Africa's liberation from colonial and neo-colonial domination.^[31]

On the continental level, Nkrumah sought to unite Africa so that it could defend its international economic interests and stand up against the political pressures from East and West that were a result of the Cold War. His dream for Africa was a continuation of the Pan-Africanist dream as expressed at the Manchester conference. The initial strategy was to encourage revolutionary political movements in Africa, beginning with a Ghana, Guinea, and Mali union, that would serve as the psychological and political impetus for the

formation of a United States of Africa. Thus, when Nkrumah was criticized for paying little attention to Ghana or for wasting national resources in supporting external programmes, he reversed the argument and accused his opponents of being short-sighted.^[31]

But the heavy financial burdens created by Nkrumah's development policies and Pan-African adventures created new sources of opposition. With the presentation in July 1961 of the country's first austerity budget, Ghana's workers and farmers became aware of and critical of the cost to them of Nkrumah's programmes. Their reaction set the model for the protests over taxes and benefits that were to dominate Ghanaian political crises for the next thirty years.^[31]

CPP backbenchers and UP representatives in the National Assembly sharply criticized the government's demand for increased taxes and, particularly, for a forced savings programme. Urban workers began a protest strike, the most serious of a number of public outcries against government measures during 1961. Nkrumah's public demands for an end to corruption in the government and the party further undermined popular faith in the national government. A drop in the price paid to cocoa farmers by the government marketing board aroused resentment among a segment of the population that had always been Nkrumah's major opponent.^[31]

Growth of opposition to Nkrumah

Nkrumah's complete domination of political power had served to isolate lesser leaders, leaving each a real or imagined challenger to the ruler. After opposition parties were crushed, opponents came only from within the CPP hierarchy. Among its members was Tawia Adamafio, an Accra politician. Nkrumah had made him general secretary of the CPP for a brief time. Later, Adamafio was appointed minister of state for presidential affairs, the most important post in the president's staff at Flagstaff House, which gradually became the centre for all decision making and much of the real administrative machinery for both the CPP and the government. The other leader with an apparently autonomous base was John Tettegah, leader of the Trade Union Congress. Neither, however, proved to have any power other than that granted to them by the president.^[32]

By 1961, however, the young and more radical members of the CPP leadership, led by Adamafio, had gained ascendancy over the original CPP leaders like Gbedemah. After a bomb attempt on Nkrumah's life in August 1962, Adamafio, Ako Adjei (then minister of foreign affairs), and Cofie Crabbe (all members of the CPP) were jailed under the Preventive Detention Act. The first Inspector-General of Police, E. R. T. Madjitey, from Asite in Manya-Krobo was also relieved of his post. The CPP newspapers charged them with complicity in the assassination attempt, offering as evidence only the fact that they had all chosen to ride in cars far behind the president's when the bomb was thrown.^[32]

For more than a year, the trial of the alleged plotters of the 1962 assassination attempt occupied centre stage. The accused were brought to trial before the three-judge court for state security, headed by the chief justice, Sir Arku Korsah. When the court acquitted the accused, Nkrumah used his constitutional prerogative to dismiss Korsah. Nkrumah then obtained a vote from the parliament that allowed retrial of Adamafio and his associates. A new court, with a jury chosen by Nkrumah, found all the accused guilty and sentenced them to death. These sentences, however, were commuted to twenty years' imprisonment.^[32]

One-party state

In early 1964, in order to prevent future challenges from the judiciary and after another national referendum, Nkrumah obtained a constitutional amendment allowing him to dismiss any judge. Ghana officially became a one-party state and an act of parliament ensured that there would be only one candidate for president. Other parties having already been outlawed, no non-CPP candidates came forward to challenge the party slate in the general elections announced for June 1965. Nkrumah had been re-elected president of the country for less than a year when members of the National Liberation Council (NLC) overthrew the CPP government in a military coup on 24 February 1966. At the time, Nkrumah was in China. He took up asylum in Guinea, where he remained until he died in 1972.^[32]

Fall of the Nkrumah regime and its aftermath

Leaders of the 1966 military coup justified their takeover by charging that the CPP administration was abusive and corrupt, that Nkrumah's involvement in African politics was overly aggressive, and that the nation lacked democratic practices. They claimed that the military coup of 1966 was a nationalist one because it liberated the nation from Nkrumah's dictatorship. Despite the vast political changes that were brought about by the overthrow of Kwame Nkrumah, many problems remained, including ethnic and regional divisions, the country's economic burdens, and mixed emotions about a resurgence of an overly strong central authority. A considerable portion of the population had become convinced that effective, honest government was incompatible with competitive political parties. Many Ghanaians remained committed to nonpolitical leadership for the nation, even in the form of military rule. The problems of the Busia administration, the country's first elected government after Nkrumah's fall, illustrated the problems Ghana would continue to face.^[33] It has been argued that the coup was supported by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency;^{[34][35]}

The National Liberation Council (NLC), composed of four army officers and four police officers, assumed executive power. It appointed a cabinet of civil servants and promised to restore democratic government as quickly as possible. These moves culminated in the appointment of a representative assembly to draft a constitution for the Second Republic of Ghana. Political parties were allowed to operate beginning in late 1968. In Ghana's 1969 elections, the first competitive nationwide political contest since 1956, the major contenders were the Progress Party (PP), headed by Kofi Abrefa Busia, and the National Alliance of Liberals (NAL), led by Komla A. Gbedemah. The PP found much of its support among the old opponents of Nkrumah's CPP – the educated middle class and traditionalists of the Ashanti Region and the North. The NAL was seen as the successor of the CPP's right wing. Overall, the PP gained 59 percent of the popular vote and 74 percent of the seats in the National Assembly.^[36]

Gbedemah, who was soon barred from taking his National Assembly seat by a Supreme Court decision, retired from politics, leaving the NAL without a strong leader. In October 1970, the NAL absorbed the members of three other minor parties in the assembly to form the Justice Party (JP) under the leadership of Joseph Appiah. Their combined strength constituted what amounted to a southern bloc with a solid constituency among most of the Ewe and the peoples of the coastal cities.^[36]

PP leader Busia became prime minister in September 1970. After a brief period under an interim three-member presidential commission, the electoral college chose as president Chief Justice Edward Akufo-Addo, one of the leading nationalist politicians of the UGCC era and one of the judges dismissed by Nkrumah in 1964.^[36]

All attention, however, remained focused on Prime Minister Busia and his government. Much was expected of the Busia administration, because its parliamentarians were considered intellectuals and, therefore, more perceptive in their evaluations of what needed to be done. Many Ghanaians hoped that their decisions would be in the general interest of the nation, as compared with those made by the Nkrumah administration, which were judged to satisfy narrow party interests and, more important, Nkrumah's personal agenda. The NLC had given assurances that there would be more democracy, more political maturity, and more freedom in Ghana, because the politicians allowed to run for the 1969 elections were proponents of Western democracy. In fact, these were the same individuals who had suffered under the old regime and were, therefore, thought to understand the benefits of democracy.^[36]

Two early measures initiated by the Busia government were the expulsion of large numbers of non-citizens from the country and a companion measure to limit foreign involvement in small businesses. The moves were aimed at relieving the unemployment created by the country's precarious economic situation. The policies were popular because they forced out of the retail sector of the economy those foreigners, especially Lebanese, Asians, and Nigerians, who were perceived as unfairly monopolizing trade to the disadvantage of Ghanaians. Many other Busia moves, however, were not popular. Busia's decision to introduce a loan programme for university students, who had hitherto received free education, was challenged because it was interpreted as introducing a class system into the country's highest institutions of learning. Some observers even saw Busia's devaluation of the national currency and his encouragement of foreign investment in the industrial sector of the economy as conservative ideas that could undermine Ghana's sovereignty.^[36]

The opposition Justice Party's basic policies did not differ significantly from those of the Busia administration. Still, the party attempted to stress the importance of the central government rather than that of limited private enterprise in economic development, and it continued to emphasize programmes of primary interest to the urban work force. The ruling PP emphasized the need for development in rural areas, both to slow the movement of population to the cities and to redress regional imbalance in levels of development. The JP and a growing number of PP members favoured suspension of payment on some foreign debts of the Nkrumah era. This attitude grew more popular as debt payments became more difficult to meet. Both parties favoured creation of a West African economic community or an economic union with the neighboring West African states.^[36]

Despite broad popular support garnered at its inception and strong foreign connections, the Busia government fell victim to an army coup within twenty-seven months. Neither ethnic nor class differences played a role in the overthrow of the PP government. The crucial causes were the country's continuing economic difficulties, both those stemming from the high foreign debts incurred by Nkrumah and those resulting from internal problems. The PP government had inherited US\$580 million in medium- and long-term debts, an amount equal to 25 percent of the gross domestic product of 1969. By 1971 the US\$580 million had been further inflated by US\$72 million in accrued interest payments and US\$296 million in short-term commercial credits. Within the country, an even larger internal debt fueled inflation.^[36]

Ghana's economy remained largely dependent upon the often difficult cultivation of and market for cocoa. Cocoa prices had always been volatile, but exports of this tropical crop normally provided about half of the country's foreign currency earnings. Beginning in the 1960s, however, a number of factors combined to limit severely this vital source of national income. These factors included foreign competition (particularly from neighboring Côte d'Ivoire), a lack of understanding of free-market forces (by the government in

setting prices paid to farmers), accusations of bureaucratic incompetence in the Cocoa Marketing Board, and the smuggling of crops into Côte d'Ivoire. As a result, Ghana's income from cocoa exports continued to fall dramatically.^[36]

Austerity measures imposed by the Busia administration, although wise in the long run, alienated influential farmers, who until then had been PP supporters. These measures were part of Busia's economic structural adjustment efforts to put the country on a sounder financial base. The austerity programmes had been recommended by the International Monetary Fund. The recovery measures also severely affected the middle class and the salaried work force, both of which faced wage freezes, tax increases, currency devaluations, and rising import prices. These measures precipitated protests from the Trade Union Congress. In response, the government sent the army to occupy the trade union headquarters and to block strike actions—a situation that some perceived as negating the government's claim to be operating democratically.^[36]

The army troops and officers upon whom Busia relied for support were themselves affected, both in their personal lives and in the tightening of the defense budget, by these same austerity measures. As the leader of the anti-Busia coup declared on January 13, 1972, even those amenities enjoyed by the army during the Nkrumah regime were no longer available. Knowing that austerity had alienated the officers, the Busia government began to change the leadership of the army's combat elements. This, however, was the last straw. Lieutenant Colonel Ignatius Kutu Acheampong, temporarily commanding the First Brigade around Accra, led a bloodless coup that ended the Second Republic.^[36]

National Redemption Council years, 1972–79

Despite its short existence, the Second Republic was significant in that the development problems the nation faced came clearly into focus. These included uneven distribution of investment funds and favouritism toward certain groups and regions. Important questions about developmental priorities remained unanswered, and after the failure of both the Nkrumah and the Busia regimes (one a one-party state, and the other a multi-party parliamentary democracy) Ghana's path to political stability was obscure.^[37]

Acheampong's National Redemption Council (NRC) claimed that it had to act to remove the ill effects of the currency devaluation of the previous government and thereby, at least in the short run, to improve living conditions for individual Ghanaians. To justify their takeover, coup leaders leveled charges of corruption against Busia and his ministers. The NRC sought to create a truly military government and did not outline any plan for the return of the nation to democratic rule.^[37]

In matters of economic policy, Busia's austerity measures were reversed, the Ghanaian currency was revalued upward, foreign debt was repudiated or unilaterally rescheduled, and all large foreign-owned companies were nationalized. The government also provided price supports for basic food imports, while seeking to encourage Ghanaians to become self-reliant in agriculture and the production of raw materials. These measures, while instantly popular, did nothing to solve the country's problems and in fact aggravated the problem of capital flow. Any economic successes were overridden by other basic economic factors. Industry and transportation suffered greatly as oil prices rose in 1974, and the lack of foreign exchange and credit left the country without fuel. Basic food production continued to decline even as the population grew. Disillusionment with the government developed, and accusations of corruption began to surface.^[37]

The reorganization of the NRC into the Supreme Military Council (SMC) in 1975 may have been part of a face-saving attempt. Little input from the civilian sector was allowed, and military officers were put in charge of all ministries and state enterprises down to the local level. During the NRC's early years, these administrative changes led many Ghanaians to hope that the soldiers in command would improve the efficiency of the country's bloated bureaucracies.^[37]

Shortly after that time, the government sought to stifle opposition by issuing a decree forbidding the propagation of rumors and by banning a number of independent newspapers and detaining their journalists. Also, armed soldiers broke up student demonstrations, and the government repeatedly closed the universities, which had become important centres of opposition to NRC policies. The self-appointed Ashanti General I. K. Acheampong seemed to have much sympathy for women than his ailing economic policies. As the Commissioner (Minister) of Finance, he signed Government checks to concubines and other ladies he barely knew. VW Gulf cars were imported and given to beautiful ladies he came across. Import licenses were given out to friends and ethnic affiliates with impunity.

The SMC by 1977 found itself constrained by mounting non-violent opposition. To be sure, discussions about the nation's political future and its relationship to the SMC had begun in earnest. Although the various opposition groups (university students, lawyers, and other organized civilian groups) called for a return to civilian constitutional rule, Acheampong and the SMC favoured a union government—a mixture of elected civilian and appointed military leaders—but one in which party politics would be abolished. University students and many intellectuals criticized the union government idea, but others, such as Justice Gustav Koranteng-Addow, who chaired the seventeen-member ad hoc committee appointed by the government to work out details of the plan, defended it as the solution to the nation's political problems. Supporters of the union government idea viewed multiparty political contests as the perpetrators of social tension and community conflict among classes, regions, and ethnic groups. Unionists argued that their plan had the potential to depoliticize public life and to allow the nation to concentrate its energies on economic problems.^[37]

A national referendum was held in March 1978 to allow the people to accept or reject the union government concept. A rejection of the union government meant a continuation of military rule. Given this choice, it was surprising that so narrow a margin voted in favour of union government. Opponents of the idea organized demonstrations against the government, arguing that the referendum vote had not been free or fair. The Acheampong government reacted by banning several organizations and by jailing as many as 300 of its opponents.^[37]

The agenda for change in the union government referendum called for the drafting of a new constitution by an SMC-appointed commission, the selection of a constituent assembly by November 1978, and general elections in June 1979. The ad hoc committee had recommended a nonparty election, an elected executive president, and a cabinet whose members would be drawn from outside a single-house National Assembly. The military council would then step down, although its members could run for office as individuals.^[37]

In July 1978, in a sudden move, the other SMC officers forced Acheampong to resign, replacing him with Lieutenant General Frederick W. K. Akuffo. The SMC apparently acted in response to continuing pressure to find a solution to the country's economic dilemma. Inflation was estimated to be as high as 300 percent that year. There were shortages of basic commodities, and cocoa production fell to half its 1964 peak. The council was also motivated by Acheampong's failure to dampen rising political pressure for changes. Akuffo, the new SMC chairman, promised publicly to hand over political power to a new government to be elected by 1 July 1979.^[37]

Despite Akuffo's assurances, opposition to the SMC persisted. The call for the formation of political parties intensified. In an effort to gain support in the face of continuing strikes over economic and political issues, the Akuffo government at length announced that the formation of political parties would be allowed after January 1979. Akuffo also granted amnesty to former members of both Nkrumah's CPP and Busia's PP, as well as to all those convicted of subversion under Acheampong. The decree lifting the ban on party politics went into effect on 1 January 1979, as planned. The constitutional assembly that had been working on a new constitution presented an approved draft and adjourned in May. All appeared set for a new attempt at constitutional government in July, when a group of young army officers overthrew the SMC government in June 1979.^[37]

The Rawlings era

On 15 May 1979, less than five weeks before constitutional elections were to be held, a group of junior officers led by Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings attempted a coup. Initially unsuccessful, the coup leaders were jailed and held for courtmartial. On 4 June, however, sympathetic military officers overthrew the Akuffo regime and released Rawlings and his cohorts from prison fourteen days before the scheduled election. Although the SMC's pledge to return political power to civilian hands addressed the concerns of those who wanted civilian government, the young officers who had staged the June 4 coup insisted that issues critical to the image of the army and important for the stability of national politics had been ignored. Naomi Chazan, a leading analyst of Ghanaian politics, aptly assessed the significance of the 1979 coup in the following statement:^[38]

Unlike the initial SMC II [the Akuffo period, 1978–1979] rehabilitation effort which focused on the power elite, this second attempt at reconstruction from a situation of disintegration was propelled by growing alienation. It strove, by reforming the guidelines of public behavior, to define anew the state power structure and to revise its inherent social obligations.... In retrospect the most irreversible outcome of this phase was the systematic eradication of the SMC leadership.... [Their] executions signaled not only the termination of the already fallacious myth of the nonviolence of Ghanaian politics, but, more to the point, the deadly serious determination of the new government to wipe the political slate clean.^[38]

Rawlings and the young officers formed the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). The armed forces were purged of senior officers accused of corrupting the image of the military. In carrying out its goal, however, the AFRC was caught between two groups with conflicting interests, Chazan observed. These included the "soldier-supporters of the AFRC who were happy to lash out at all manifestations of the old regimes; and the now organized political parties who decried the undue violence and advocated change with restraint."^[38]

Despite the coup and the subsequent executions of former heads of military governments (Afrifa of the NLC; Acheampong and some of his associates of the NRC; and Akuffo and leading members of the SMC), the planned elections took place, and Ghana had returned to constitutional rule by the end of September 1979. Before power was granted to the elected government, however, the AFRC sent the unambiguous message that "people dealing with the public, in whatever capacity, are subject to popular supervision, must abide by fundamental notions of probity, and have an obligation to put the good of the community above personal objective." The AFRC position was that the nation's political leaders, at least those from within the

military, had not been accountable to the people. The administration of Hilla Limann, inaugurated on 24 September 1979, at the beginning of the Third Republic, was thus expected to measure up to the new standard advocated by the AFRC.^[38]

Limann's People's National Party (PNP) began the Third Republic with control of only seventy-one of the 140 legislative seats. The opposition Popular Front Party (PFP) won forty-two seats, while twenty-six elective positions were distributed among three lesser parties. The percentage of the electorate that voted had fallen to 40 percent. Unlike the country's previous elected leaders, Limann was a former diplomat and a noncharismatic figure with no personal following. As Limann himself observed, the ruling PNP included people of conflicting ideological orientations. They sometimes disagreed strongly among themselves on national policies. Many observers, therefore, wondered whether the new government was equal to the task confronting the state.^[38]

The most immediate threat to the Limann administration, however, was the AFRC, especially those officers who organized themselves into the "June 4 Movement" to monitor the civilian administration. In an effort to keep the AFRC from looking over its shoulder, the government ordered Rawlings and several other army and police officers associated with the AFRC into retirement; nevertheless, Rawlings and his associates remained a latent threat, particularly as the economy continued its decline. The first Limann budget, for fiscal year (FY—see Glossary) 1981, estimated the Ghanaian inflation rate at 70 percent for that year, with a budget deficit equal to 30 percent of the gross national product (GNP—see Glossary). The Trade Union Congress claimed that its workers were no longer earning enough to pay for food, let alone anything else. A rash of strikes, many considered illegal by the government, resulted, each one lowering productivity and therefore national income. In September the government announced that all striking public workers would be dismissed. These factors rapidly eroded the limited support the Limann government enjoyed among civilians and soldiers. The government fell on 31 December 1981, in another Rawlings-led coup.^[38]

Rawlings and his colleagues suspended the 1979 constitution, dismissed the president and his cabinet, dissolved the parliament, and proscribed existing political parties. They established the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC), initially composed of seven members with Rawlings as chairman, to exercise executive and legislative powers. The existing judicial system was preserved, but alongside it the PNDC created the National Investigation Committee to root out corruption and other economic offenses, the anonymous *Citizens' Vetting Committee* to punish tax evasion, and the Public Tribunals to try various crimes. The PNDC proclaimed its intent to allow the people to exercise political power through defense committees to be established in communities, workplaces, and in units of the armed forces and police. Under the PNDC, Ghana remained a unitary government.^[38]

In December 1982, the PNDC announced a plan to decentralize government from Accra to the regions, the districts, and local communities, but it maintained overall control by appointing regional and district secretaries who exercised executive powers and also chaired regional and district councils. Local councils, however, were expected progressively to take over the payment of salaries, with regions and districts assuming more powers from the national government. In 1984, the PNDC created a National Appeals Tribunal to hear appeals from the public tribunals, changed the Citizens' Vetting Committee into the Office of Revenue Collection and replaced the system of defense committees with Committees for the Defense of the Revolution.^[38]

In 1984, the PNDC also created a National Commission on Democracy to study ways to establish participatory democracy in Ghana. The commission issued a "Blue Book" in July 1987 outlining modalities for district-level elections, which were held in late 1988 and early 1989, for newly created district

assemblies. One-third of the assembly members are appointed by the government.^[38]

The second coming of Rawlings: the first six years, 1982–87

The new government that took power on 31 December 1981, was the eighth in the fifteen years since the fall of Nkrumah. Calling itself the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC), its membership included Rawlings as chairman, Brigadier Joseph Nunoo-Mensah (whom Limann had dismissed as army commander), two other officers, and three civilians. Despite its military connections, the PNDC made it clear that it was unlike other soldier-led governments. This was immediately proved by the appointment of fifteen civilians to cabinet positions.^[39]

In a radio broadcast on 5 January 1982, Rawlings presented a detailed statement explaining the factors that had necessitated termination of the Third Republic. The PNDC chairman assured the people that he had no intention of imposing himself on Ghanaians. Rather, he "wanted a chance for the people, farmers, workers, soldiers, the rich and the poor, to be part of the decision-making process." He described the two years since the AFRC had handed over power to a civilian government as a period of regression during which political parties attempted to divide the people in order to rule them. The ultimate purpose for the return of Rawlings was, therefore, to "restore human dignity to Ghanaians." In the chairman's words, the dedication of the PNDC to achieving its goals was different from any the country had ever known. It was for that reason that the takeover was not a military coup, but rather a "holy war" that would involve the people in the transformation of the socioeconomic structure of the society. The PNDC also served notice to friends and foes alike that any interference in the PNDC agenda would be "fiercely resisted."^[39]

Opposition to the PNDC administration developed nonetheless in different sectors of the political spectrum. The most obvious groups opposing the government were former PNP and PFP members. They argued that the Third Republic had not been given time to prove itself and that the PNDC administration was unconstitutional. Further opposition came from the Ghana Bar Association (GBA), which criticized the government's use of people's tribunals in the administration of justice. Members of the Trade Union Congress were also angered when the PNDC ordered them to withdraw demands for increased wages. The National Union of Ghanaian Students (NUGS) went even farther, calling on the government to hand over power to the attorney general, who would supervise new elections.^[39]

By the end of June 1982, an attempted coup had been discovered, and those implicated had been executed. Many who disagreed with the PNDC administration were driven into exile, where they began organizing their opposition. They accused the government of human rights abuses and political intimidation, which forced the country, especially the press, into a "culture of silence."^[39]

Meanwhile, the PNDC was subjected to the influence of contrasting political philosophies and goals. Although the revolutionary leaders agreed on the need for radical change, they differed on the means of achieving it. For example, John Ndebugre, secretary for agriculture in the PNDC government, who was later appointed northern regional secretary (governor), belonged to the radical Kwame Nkrumah Revolutionary Guard, an extreme left-wing organization that advocated a Marxist–Leninist course for the PNDC. He was detained and jailed for most of the latter part of the 1980s. Other members of the PNDC, including Kojo Tsikata, P.V. Obeng, and Kwesi Botchwey, were believed to be united only by their determination either to uplift the country from its desperate conditions or to protect themselves from vocal opposition.^[39]

In keeping with Rawlings's commitment to populism as a political principle, the PNDC began to form governing coalitions and institutions that would incorporate the populace at large into the machinery of the national government. Workers' Defence Committees (WDCs), People's Defence Committees (PDCs), Citizens' Vetting Committees (CVCs), Regional Defence Committees (RDCs), and National Defence Committees (NDCs) were all created to ensure that those at the bottom of society were given the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process. These committees were to be involved in community projects and community decisions, and individual members were expected to expose corruption and "anti- social activities." Public tribunals, which were established outside the normal legal system, were also created to try those accused of antigovernment acts. And a four-week workshop aimed at making these cadres morally and intellectually prepared for their part in the revolution was completed at the University of Ghana, Legon, in July and August 1983.^[39]

Various opposition groups criticized the PDCs and WDCs, however. The aggressiveness of certain WDCs, it was argued, interfered with management's ability to make the bold decisions needed for the recovery of the national economy. In response to such criticisms, the PNDC announced on 1 December 1984, the dissolution of all PDCs, WDCs, and NDCs, and their replacement with Committees for the Defence of the Revolution (CDRs). With regard to public boards and statutory corporations, excluding banks and financial institutions, Joint Consultative Committees (JCCs) that acted as advisory bodies to managing directors were created.^[39]

The public tribunals, however, despite their characterization as undemocratic by the GBA, were maintained. Although the tribunals had been established in 1982, the law providing for the creation of a national public tribunal to hear and determine appeals from, and decisions of, regional public tribunals was not passed until August 1984. Section 3 and Section 10 of the PNDC Establishment Proclamation limited public tribunals to cases of a political and an economic nature. The limitations placed on public tribunals by the government in 1984 may have been an attempt by the administration to redress certain weaknesses. The tribunals, however, were not abolished; rather, they were defended as "fundamental to a good legal system" that needed to be maintained in response to "growing legal consciousness on the part of the people."^[39]

At the time when the foundations of these sociopolitical institutions were being laid, the PNDC was also engaged in a debate about how to finance the reconstruction of the national economy. The country had indeed suffered from what some described as the excessive and unwise, if not foolish, expenditures of the Nkrumah regime. The degree of decline under the NRC and the SMC had also been devastating. By December 1981, when the PNDC came to power, the inflation rate topped 200 percent, while real GDP had declined by 3 percent per annum for seven years. Not only cocoa production but even diamonds and timber exports had dropped dramatically. Gold production had also fallen to half its preindependence level.^[39]

Ghana's sorry economic condition, according to the PNDC, had resulted in part from the absence of good political leadership. In fact, as early as the AFRC administration in 1979, Rawlings and his associates had accused three former military leaders (generals Afrifa, Acheampong, and Akuffo) of corruption and greed and of thereby contributing to the national crisis and had executed them on the basis of this accusation. In other words, the AFRC in 1979 attributed the national crisis to internal, primarily political, causes. The overthrow of the Limann administration by the PNDC in 1981 was an attempt to prevent another inept administration from aggravating an already bad economic situation. By implication, the way to resolve some of the problems was to stabilize the political situation and to improve the economic conditions of the nation radically.^[39]

At the end of its first year in power, the PNDC announced a four-year programme of economic austerity

and sacrifice that was to be the first phase of an Economic Recovery Programme (ERP). If the economy were to improve significantly, there was need for a large injection of capital—a resource that could only be obtained from international financial institutions of the West. There were those on the PNDC's ideological left, however, who rejected consultation with such agencies because these institutions were blamed in part for the nation's predicament. Precisely because some members of the government also held such views, the PNDC secretary for finance and economic planning, Kwesi Botchwey, felt the need to justify World Bank (see Glossary) assistance to Ghana in 1983.^[39]

It would be naive and unrealistic for certain sections of the Ghanaian society to think that the request for economic assistance from the World Bank and its affiliates means a sell-out of the aims and objectives of the Ghanaian revolution to the international community.... It does not make sense for the country to become a member of the bank and the IMF and continue to pay its dues only to decline to utilize the resources of these two institutions.^[39]

The PNDC recognized that it could not depend on friendly nations such as Libya to address the economic problems of Ghana. The magnitude of the crisis—made worse by widespread bush fires that devastated crop production in 1983–1984 and by the return of more than one million Ghanaians who had been expelled from Nigeria in 1983, which had intensified the unemployment situation—called for monetary assistance from institutions with bigger financial chests.^[39]

Phase One of the ERP began in 1983. Its goal was economic stability. In broad terms, the government wanted to reduce inflation and to create confidence in the nation's ability to recover. By 1987 progress was clearly evident. The rate of inflation had dropped to 20 percent, and between 1983 and 1987, Ghana's economy reportedly grew at 6 percent per year. Official assistance from donor countries to Ghana's recovery programme averaged US\$430 million in 1987, more than double that of the preceding years. The PNDC administration also made a remarkable payment of more than US\$500 million in loan arrears dating to before 1966. In recognition of these achievements, international agencies had pledged more than US\$575 million to the country's future programmes by May 1987. With these accomplishments in place, the PNDC inaugurated Phase Two of the ERP, which envisioned privatization of state-owned assets, currency devaluation, and increased savings and investment, and which was to continue until 1990.^[39]

Notwithstanding the successes of Phase One of the ERP, many problems remained, and both friends and foes of the PNDC were quick to point them out. One commentator noted the high rate of Ghanaian unemployment as a result of the belt-tightening policies of the PNDC. In the absence of employment or redeployment policies to redress such problems, he wrote, the effects of the austerity programmes might create circumstances that could derail the PNDC recovery agenda.^[39]

Unemployment was only one aspect of the political problems facing the PNDC government; another was the size and breadth of the PNDC's political base. The PNDC initially espoused a populist programme that appealed to a wide variety of rural and urban constituents. Even so, the PNDC was the object of significant criticism from various groups that in one way or another called for a return to constitutional government. Much of this criticism came from student organizations, the GBA, and opposition groups in self-imposed exile, who questioned the legitimacy of the military government and its declared intention of returning the country to constitutional rule. So vocal was the outcry against the PNDC that it appeared on the surface as

if the PNDC enjoyed little support among those groups who had historically molded and influenced Ghanaian public opinion. At a time when difficult policies were being implemented, the PNDC could ill afford the continued alienation and opposition of such prominent critics.^[39]

By the mid-1980s, therefore, it had become essential that the PNDC demonstrate that it was actively considering steps towards constitutionalism and civilian rule. This was true notwithstanding the recognition of Rawlings as an honest leader and the perception that the situation he was trying to redress was not of his creation. To move in the desired direction, the PNDC needed to weaken the influence and credibility of all antagonistic groups while it created the necessary political structures that would bring more and more Ghanaians into the process of national reconstruction. The PNDC's solution to its dilemma was the proposal for district assemblies.^[39]

District assemblies

Although the National Commission for Democracy (NCD) had existed as an agency of the PNDC since 1982, it was not until September 1984 that Justice Daniel F. Annan, himself a member of the ruling council, was appointed chairman. The official inauguration of the NCD in January 1985 signaled PNDC determination to move the nation in a new political direction. According to its mandate, the NCD was to devise a viable democratic system, utilizing public discussions. Annan explained the necessity for the commission's work by arguing that the political party system of the past lost track of the country's socio-economic development processes. There was the need, therefore, to search for a new political order that would be functionally democratic. Constitutional rules of the past were not acceptable to the new revolutionary spirit, Annan continued, which saw the old political order as using the ballot box "merely to ensure that politicians got elected into power, after which communication between the electorate and their elected representative completely broke down."^[40]

After two years of deliberations and public hearings, the NCD recommended the formation of district assemblies as local governing institutions that would offer opportunities to the ordinary person to become involved in the political process. The PNDC scheduled elections of the proposed assemblies for the last quarter of 1988.^[40]

If, as Rawlings said, the PNDC revolution was a "holy war," then the proposed assemblies were part of a PNDC policy intended to annihilate enemy forces or, at least, to reduce them to impotence. The strategy was to deny the opposition a legitimate political forum within which it could articulate its objections to the government. It was for this reason, as much as it was for those stated by Annan, that a five-member District Assembly Committee was created in each of the nation's 110 administrative districts and was charged by the NCD with ensuring that all candidates followed electoral rules. The district committees were to disqualify automatically any candidate who had a record of criminal activity, insanity, or imprisonment involving fraud or electoral offenses in the past, especially after 1979. Also barred from elections were all professionals accused of fraud, dishonesty, and malpractice. The ban on political parties, instituted at the time of the Rawlings coup, was to continue.^[40]

By barring candidates associated with corruption and mismanagement of national resources from running for district assembly positions, the PNDC hoped to establish new values to govern political behaviour in Ghana. To do so effectively, the government also made it illegal for candidates to mount campaign platforms other than the one defined by the NCD. Every person qualified to vote in the district could

propose candidates or be nominated as a candidate. Candidates could not be nominated by organizations and associations but had to run for district office on the basis of personal qualifications and service to their communities.^[40]

Once in session, an assembly was to become the highest political authority in each district. Assembly members were to be responsible for deliberation, evaluation, coordination, and implementation of programmes accepted as appropriate for the district's economic development; however, district assemblies were to be subject to the general guidance and direction of the central government. To ensure that district developments were in line with national policies, one-third of assembly members were to be traditional authorities (chiefs) or their representatives; these members were to be approved by the PNDC in consultation with the traditional authorities and other "productive economic groups in the district." In other words, a degree of autonomy may have been granted to the assemblies in the determination of programmes most suited to the districts, but the PNDC left itself with the ultimate responsibility of making sure that such programmes were in line with the national economic recovery programme.^[40]

District assemblies as outlined in PNDC documents were widely discussed by friends and foes of the government. Some hailed the proposal as compatible with the goal of granting the people opportunities to manage their own affairs, but others (especially those of the political right) accused the government of masking its intention to remain in power. If the government's desire for democracy were genuine, a timetable for national elections should have been its priority rather than the preoccupation with local government, they argued. Some questioned the wisdom of incorporating traditional chiefs and the degree to which these traditional leaders would be committed to the district assembly idea, while others attacked the election guidelines as undemocratic and, therefore, as contributing to a culture of silence in Ghana. To such critics, the district assemblies were nothing but a move by the PNDC to consolidate its position.^[40]

Rawlings, however, responded to such criticism by restating the PNDC strategy and the rationale behind it:^[40]

Steps towards more formal political participation are being taken through the district-level elections that we will be holding throughout the country as part of our decentralisation policy. As I said in my nationwide broadcast on December 31, if we are to see a sturdy tree of democracy grow, we need to learn from the past and nurture very carefully and deliberately political institutions that will become the pillars upon which the people's power will be erected. A new sense of responsibility must be created in each workplace, each village, each district; we already see elements of this in the work of the CDRs, the December 31 Women's Movement, the June 4 Movement, Town and Village Development Committees, and other organizations through which the voice of the people is being heard.^[40]

As for the categorization of certain PNDC policies as "leftist" and "rightist," Rawlings dismissed such allegations as "remarkably simplistic ... What is certain is that we are moving forward!" For the PNDC, therefore, the district elections constituted an obvious first step in a political process that was to culminate at the national level.^[40]

Rawlings's explanation notwithstanding, various opposition groups continued to describe the PNDC-proposed district assemblies as a mere public relations ploy designed to give political legitimacy to a government that had come to power by unconstitutional means. Longtime observers of the Ghanaian

political scene, however, identified two major issues at stake in the conflict between the government and its critics: the means by which political stability was to be achieved, and the problem of attaining sustained economic growth. Both had preoccupied the country since the era of Nkrumah. The economic recovery programmes implemented by the PNDC in 1983 and the proposal for district assemblies in 1987 were major elements in the government's strategy to address these fundamental and persistent problems. Both were very much part of the national debate in Ghana in the late 1980s.^[40]

End of one-party state

Under international and domestic pressure for a return to democracy, the PNDC allowed the establishment of a 258-member Consultative Assembly made up of members representing geographic districts as well as established civic or business organizations. The assembly was charged to draw up a draft constitution to establish a fourth republic, using PNDC proposals. The PNDC accepted the final product without revision, and it was put to a national referendum on 28 April 1992, in which it received 92% approval. On 18 May 1992, the ban on party politics was lifted in preparation for multi-party elections. The PNDC and its supporters formed a new party, the National Democratic Congress (NDC), to contest the elections. Presidential elections were held on November 3 and parliamentary elections on 29 December of that year. Members of the opposition boycotted the parliamentary elections, however, which resulted in a 200-seat Parliament with only 17 opposition party members and two independents.



Ghana's 50th Independence Anniversary parade in Accra, March 2007.

The Fourth Republic

The Constitution entered into force on 7 January 1993, to found the Fourth Republic. On that day, Rawlings was inaugurated as President and members of Parliament swore their oaths of office. In 1996, the opposition fully contested the presidential and parliamentary elections, which were described as peaceful, free, and transparent by domestic and international observers. Rawlings was re-elected with 57% of the popular vote. In addition, Rawlings' NDC party won 133 of the Parliament's 200 seats, just one seat short of the two-thirds majority needed to amend the Constitution, although the election returns of two parliamentary seats faced legal challenges.

In the presidential election of 2000, Jerry Rawlings endorsed his vice president, John Atta-Mills, as the candidate for the ruling NDC. John Kufuor stood for the New Patriotic Party (NPP), won the election, and became the president on 7 January 2001. The vice president was Aliu Mahama. The presidential election of 2000 was viewed as free and fair.^[41] Kufuor won another term again in the presidential election in 2004.

In the presidency of Kufuor saw several social reforms, such as the reform in the system of National Health Insurance of Ghana in 2003.^[42] In 2005 started the Ghana School Feeding Programme, in which a free hot meal per day was provided in public schools and kindergartens in the poorest area.^[43] Although some projects were criticised as unfinished or unfunded, the progress of Ghana was noted internationally.^[44]

President Kufuor soon gave up power in 2008. The ruling New Patriotic Party chose Nana Akuffo Addo, son of Edward Akufo-Addo as their candidate while National Democratic Congress's John Atta Mills stood for the third time. After a run-off, John Atta Mills won the election. On 24 July 2012, Ghana suffered a shocking blow when their president died. Power was then given to his vice-president, John Dramani Mahama. He chose the then Governor of the Bank of Ghana, Mr Amissah Arthur, as his vice. The National Democratic Congress won the 2012 election, making John Mahama rule again, his first term.

See also

- Heads of government of Ghana
- History of Africa
- History of West Africa
- List of Ghana governments
- List of heads of state of Ghana
- Politics of Ghana
- Timeline of Accra

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